





A Self-Study Guide





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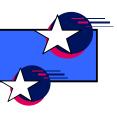
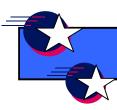


TABLE OF CONTENTS

*	Introduction	4
*	How to Use the Self-Study Guide	5
*	Learning Objectives	6
*	Pre-test	7
*	Background	9
*	Policy and Mission	10
*	Purpose of Special Emphasis Programs	. 13
*	USDA Special Emphasis Programs Objectives	14
*	Special Emphasis Programs Activities	15
*	Special Emphasis Programs Benefits	20
	USDA Special Emphasis Program Areas	21
*	Commemorative Months	22
*	Post-test	23
*	Appendix A - Federal Laws and Regulations	25
	Test Answers	27
*	Course Evaluation	28
*	Scannable Participant Response Form	. 29
*	Affirmation of Course Completion Form	31





Introduction

Welcome to the Special Emphasis Programs Self-Study Guide....

USDA

The Office of Civil Rights, Agency Support and Special Emphasis Programs Division developed this self-study guide with assistance from agency civil rights experts and training and outreach coordinators to provide a basic understanding of the purpose of Special Emphasis Programs and the

benefits of these programs to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Natural Resource Conservation Service Agency has taken this document and put it in a user-friendly, training format.

The Department of Agriculture recognizes and supports the policy of the United States government to provide equal employment opportunity for all people and to promote a culture within the workplace that will ensure that this policy is implemented. Three years ago, a Civil Rights Action Team and a Civil Rights Implementation Team were established to develop and implement recommendations relating to employment complaints and other civil rights issues.

One of the most significant recommendations from these teams, was the requirement for mandatory civil rights training for all USDA employees. This requirement became a Departmental Regulation on September 18, 1998. This self-study guide is designed to provide the training required for one of the civil rights subjects: Special Emphasis Programs. The other components of the civil rights training are: Introduction to Civil Rights, Sexual Harassment, Outreach, Program Delivery, Cultural Diversity, Disability, Program Complaint Processing, and Employment Complaint Processing Procedures.

This training is mandatory for all USDA employees because employees at all levels are responsible for carrying out the principles of equal employment opportunity consistently everyday throughout USDA. The goal of Special Emphasis Programs is to ensure that opportunities are provided equally to all.

This self-study guide offers an overview of USDA's Special Emphasis Programs. The guide also includes a course evaluation and an affirmation of completion form. The guide is a source of learning and can serve as a future reference source for Special Emphasis Programs. It should take approximately one hour to complete this training.

If you have further questions about the programs, you may contact your agency's civil rights office. Phone numbers and addresses are listed on the inside of the front cover.





How to use the Self-Study Guide.....

Directions: This guidebook is **self-directed**. Each individual who uses this guide is responsible for allotting sufficient time and effort to satisfactorily complete all the requirements of the guide. Participants are encouraged to allow enough time for each section and not to skip sections so that they may achieve the full benefits of using this guide.

To successfully complete the training, you will be asked to follow these steps:



Take the Pre-test, **Page 7**. Put your answers on the scannable participants response form using a #2 pencil or black ink pen.



Read through the materials in the order they are presented. As you read, make comments in the margins or write down any questions you may have. Remember, this is your guide and you should feel free to highlight, underline, circle the text, or write notes for your own reference.



Take the Post-test, Page 23. Put your answers on the scannable participants response form using a #2 pencil or black ink pen.



Grade your tests using the Answers on page 27. **Compare the scores** you achieved at the beginning of the course and at the end of the course to find out how much progress you have made in understanding the concepts provided in this guide.

Your name is not required on the scannable participants response form. The purpose of the scannable response form is to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the training.



Fill out the Course Evaluation section on the scannable participants response form on page 29. This form will give valuable feedback about the quality and effectiveness of this course. You may return this form separately and anonymously.



Fill out the "Affirmation of Course Completion," Page 31. The Affirmation of Course Completion form must be returned <u>with your name</u> on it because it will be used to document that you have completed this training requirement.



Please return both forms to your agency's training coordinator or training officer. Follow the instructions provided by your agency.





How will this guide help me?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Participants will be able to:

- State why we have Special Emphasis Programs
- ldentify the Special Emphasis Program areas in USDA
- Describe some of the activities of the Special Emphasis
 Programs and discuss why these activities are conducted
- List the benefits and expected outcomes of the Special Emphasis Programs
- State the purpose of Special Observances







Pre-test

Directions: Please take the Pre-test before beginning the Special Emphasis Programs training. Remember to use the scannable participant response form to record your answers.

- **1.** Special Emphasis Programs are used to improve employment opportunities for minorities, women, and people with disabilities.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- **2.** Special Emphasis Programs are encouraged and required by law, executive orders, and Departmental regulations.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 3. Special Emphasis Programs are designed to:
 - a. Increase awareness of other cultures
 - b. Educate employees on civil rights issues
 - c. Help build diversity at USDA
 - d. All of the above
- 4. Special Emphasis Programs at USDA include:
 - a. Federal Women's Program
 - b. Asian Pacific American Program
 - c. Disability Employment Program
 - d. All of the above
- **5.** Outcomes expected from a successful Special Emphasis Program are:
 - a. A more diverse workplace
 - b. A positive work environment for employees and customers
 - c. Promotions for all employees
 - d. a and b



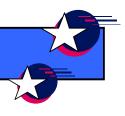
6.	Special Emphasis Programs are intended to address past employment practices that
	deny equal opportunities for all.

- a. True
- b. False
- **7.** Special Emphasis Programs help to create an awareness and appreciation for all cultures.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- **8.** Annual proclamations are issued by the President designating certain days or months as National Observances.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- **9.** The purpose of the commemorative months is to:
 - a. Entertain employees
 - b. Educate employees
 - c. Recognize contributions and achievements of all Americans
 - d. b and c
- 10. Special Emphasis Programs are important to the accomplishment of USDA's mission.
 - a. True
 - b. False



Please grade the pre-test. (Answers on page 27)
Record the number of correct answers _____





Background

Discrimination in this country resulted in practices throughout the Federal government that denied equal employment and program opportunities to women, minorities and people with disabilities. These groups are consequently underrepresented in some grades and occupations.

The Special Emphasis Programs were established to address the unique concerns of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in achieving equal opportunity in all employment and program delivery activities. However, these programs serve the interests of all USDA employees by addressing issues critical to increasing the productivity of a diverse workforce. As integral parts of the Department's Office of Civil Rights, Special Emphasis Programs provides guidance, oversight, and training to managers and employees, and outreach to customers, while working closely with agency special emphasis program managers.

Several laws, Executive Orders, Federal regulations, Presidential decrees and orders, and Supreme Court decisions have provided civil rights and Equal Employment Opportunity protections in America. They apply to all Federal employees and provide the statutory basis for the Special Emphasis Programs. (See Appendix A - Page 25)





Policy & Mission



The mission of Civil Rights is to facilitate the fair and equitable treatment of USDA cutomers and employees while ensuring the delivery and enforcement of civil rights programs and activities.



What is the Policy?

"Every customer and every employee must be treated fairly and equitably and with dignity and respect...Our employees have an enormous role in maintaining a positive, equal opportunity environment. We have a moral and a legal obligation to treat our colleagues and customers with respect and with courtesy."



The role of Special Emphasis Programs is to implement this policy by ensuring that women, minorities, and people with disabilities are provided an equal opportunity in USDA employment and program delivery activities.

These programs improve the workplace environment by promoting diversity in the workplace through educating USDA employees to appreciate, understand, and celebrate cultural differences.



What is the Mission?

The mission of Special Emphasis Programs is to ensure that Federal agencies maintain a continuing affirmative program to promote equal opportunity and to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices and policies.





Question

what is the mission of the Special Emphasis Programs?					
Write your answer on the following lines:					

Please turn to the next page for the answer



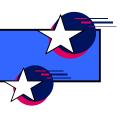


Answers

Your answers should include key concepts such as:

- Promoting diversity in the workplace
- Improving the workplace environment
- Educating USDA'S's employees to appreciate, understand, and celebrate cultural differences







What is the purpose of Special Emphasis Programs?

Special Emphasis Programs are intended to create a positive work environment where diversity is fostered and valued. These programs are designed to eliminate the institutional policies, practices and procedures that deny equal opportunities to all.

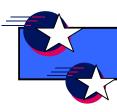
Special Emphasis Programs are management tools to ensure positive steps are taken to identify and eliminate underrepresentation.

These programs are intended to eradicate discriminatory employment practices from USDA's personnel policies, practices and working conditions. They communicate USDA's equal employment opportunity policy to all sources of job candidates without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or handicap, and solicit their recruitment assistance on a continuing basis.

What is an example of a discriminatory employment practice?

- Height requirements that may prove to be barriers to women but are not essential to the performance of a job.
- Recruiting primarily from sources not expected to produce a diverse applicant pool.

Special Emphasis Programs are designed to assure job requirements are essential to job performance and are not barriers to minorities, women, and people with disabilities.







What are the Objectives of the Special Emphasis Programs?

- To advise management in addressing the special concerns of underrepresented or underserved groups.
- To ensure specific actions are taken to ensure equal employment opportunities for underrepresented groups in connection with recruitment, employment, training, retention, promotion, and upward mobility.
- To help build diversity at USDA, through awareness, education, and appreciation of differences.
- To evaluate and analyze USDA'S's employment practices in order to identify barriers and recommend solutions for the advancement of minorities, women, and people with disabilities.
- To ensure that all applicants and employees for USDA employment and program activities are treated fairly.





Questions

a) What is the	purpose of Special Emphasis Programs?
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
····	
	
b) List some o	of the objectives of the Special Emphasis Programs.

Please turn to the next page for the answer





Answers

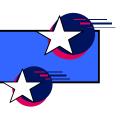
(a) Your answer should include key concepts such as:

- Enhancing employment opportunities
- Building a diverse workforce at USDA
- Educating employees on the importance of civil rights and diversity
- Identify and assist in the removal of barriers to USDA employment and program activities

(b) Your answer should include key concepts such as:

- Addressing employment-related concerns of minorities, women, and people with disabilities
- Increasing employment opportunities for minorities, women, and people with disabilities
- Eliminating discriminatory practices
- Advising management on the concerns of underrepresented groups







What do Special Emphasis Programs activities include?

Each agency has Special Emphasis Programs Managers who have knowledge, skills, and abilities in the areas of civil rights and equal employment opportunity. These managers conduct activities to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Special Emphasis Programs. These include:

- Analyzing employment trends—to examine employment statistics such as gender, age, race, color, national origin, disability, promotion, and retention trends to identify areas of underutilized and underrepresented groups.
- Participating in—the development and review of the Departmental and agencies Affirmative Employment Program Plans, annual updates, and overall affirmative employment initiatives.
- Analyzing statistics and trends—specifically in the areas of promotions, training, and awards to ensure USDA management conducts these activities fairly and in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- **Developing, implementing, and evaluating**—USDA-wide civil rights training for employees, managers, and supervisors.
- **Conducting forums, town hall meetings and other strategies**—to foster effective dialogue between management, employees and customers.





- Working with managers—to produce a diverse pool of applicants through targeted outreach and recruitment of women, minorities and people with disabilities.
- Analyzing policies and procedures—to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of women, minorities and people with disabilities.
- Networking with—special interest groups to partner with Institutions of Higher Education, national civil rights organizations, and community and civic groups.





of

Question

List some of the activities designed to accomplish the goals and objectives the Special Emphasis Programs.				
			-	

Please turn to the next page for the answer

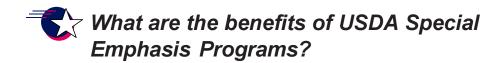




Answer

Your answer should include the following key concepts:

- Analyzing policies, procedures, and employment trends
- Assuring diversity in the applicant pool
- Promoting diversity
- Conducting forums
- Networking with stakeholders



Some of the benefits of the USDA Special Emphasis Programs include:

- Equal opportunities for all employees
- A workplace environment, free from discriminatory practices
- Improved communications resulting in a positive work environment
- An organization that embraces diversity and treats employees fairly
- An awareness and appreciation for cultural diversity in the workplace







What are the USDA Special Emphasis Programs?

The USDA Special Emphasis Program Areas are:

- African American Program
- Native American Program
- Asian Pacific American Program
- Disability Employment Program
- Tederal Women's Program
- Hispanic Employment Program







** What are Commemorative Months?

Under Public Laws, Congress calls upon the President of the United States to issue annual proclamations designating certain days or months as National Observances.

These National Observances, also known as Commemorative Months, are designed to broaden the understanding of different heritages and to recognize the contributions and achievements of all Americans to the American culture. By valuing and understanding other cultures, we learn to treat each other with dignity and respect.

Commemorative Months							
January	February African American Heritage	March Women's History					
April	May Asian Pacific American Heritage	June					
July	August	September Hispanic Heritage (Sept. 15 - October 15)					
October • Hispanic Heritage (Sept. 15 - October 15) • Disability Employment Awareness	November Native American Indian Heritage	December					







Post-test

Directions: Please take the Post-test when you finish the Special Emphasis Programs training. Remember to use the scannable participants response form to record your answers.

- **1.** Special Emphasis Programs are used to improve employment opportunities for minorities, women, and people with disabilities.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- **2.** Special Emphasis Programs are encouraged and required by law, executive orders, and Departmental regulations.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 3. Special Emphasis Programs are designed to:
 - a. Increase awareness of different cultures
 - b. Educate employees on civil rights issues
 - c. Help build diversity at USDA
 - d. All of the above
- **4.** Special Emphasis Programs at USDA include:
 - a. Federal Women's Program
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- **5.** Outcomes expected from successful Special Emphasis Programs are:
 - a. A more diverse workplace
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 - d. a and b





- **6.** Special Emphasis Programs are intended to address past employment practices that deny equal opportunities for all.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- **7.** Special Emphasis Programs help to create an awareness and appreciation for all cultures.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- **8.** Annual proclamations are issued by the President designating certain days or months as National Observances.
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 - b. False
- **9.** The purpose of the commemorative months is to:
 - a. Entertain employees
 - b. Educate employees
 - c. Recognize contributions and achievements of all Americans.
 - d. b and c
- 10. Special Emphasis Programs are important to the accomplishments of USDA's mission.
 - a. True
 - b. False



Please grade the post-test. (Answers on page 27)
Record the number of correct answers _____

Go to Page 27

Appendix A FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

LAWS

Equal Pay Act of 1963—Prohibited payment of different wages to one group of people doing essentially the same work as another group. It eliminated sex as a basis for paying different wages for similar work. It did not cover the Federal sector.

Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352)—Considered to be the basic legislation promoting EEO as we know it today. Title VII of this law defined employment discrimination and protected groups. It covered private sector employees, not the Federal government.

Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967—Provided protection from discrimination for individuals from 40 to 70 years of age. This law covered private sector employees, not the Federal government.

EEO Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-261)—Section 717 of this legislation extended the coverage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include Federal employees. This Act also required Federal agencies to submit annual national and regional EEO plans to the CSC. This law reinforced the previous Executive Orders, assuring that the provisions of those orders would become permanent requirements.

Vietnam Era Readjustment Assistance Act of 1972—Prohibits discrimination against disabled veterans of the Vietnam Era and requires affirmative action plans for this group.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973—Prohibited discrimination of handicapped persons by Federal contractors, or in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. It did not apply to Federal agencies.

Amendment to Equal Pay Act of 1963, 1974—Included Federal employers to be covered by the provisions of the original act.

Fair Labor Standards Act, 1974—Public Law 93-259 amended the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 to include Federal employers. It prohibited discrimination based on age for individuals between the ages of 40 and 65.

Civil Service Reform Act of 1978—Amended the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, removing the upper age limit. This Act also removed the mandatory retirement age of 70. It provided that recruitment for employees should be from appropriate sources in an endeavor to achieve a work force from all segments of society (FEORP)...assures that all receive equal opportunity. It indicated that equal pay should be provided for work of equal value. Discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment is defined as a "prohibited personnel practice." This Act transferred authority for most of the Federal EEO programs to EEOC.

Appendix A—FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Executive Order 10925, 1961—This Order was signed by President Kennedy. It shifted EEO policy from not only one of equal opportunity, but also to one of positive action. The Order directed "positive measures for the elimination of any discrimination, direct or indirect, which now exists." The President's Committee on Equal Opportunity and a Presidential Commission on the Status of Women was established.

Executive Order 11246, 9/24/66—EEO in the Federal Sector: President Johnson signed EO 11246 on September 24, 1966, establishing the concept of equal employment opportunity in the Federal sector. Sections 101 through 105 of the Order barred discrimination in Federal employment based on race, color, religion, or national origin. It called for programs for equal opportunity at the agency level to be under the general supervision of the Civil Service Commission (now the Office of Personnel Management). Each agency was required to establish an EEO complaints process with appeal to the CSC. It also called for CSC to issue any necessary regulations to implement the provisions of the Order. It required that each agency establish a complaint procedure as an avenue for appeal to the CSC.

Executive Order 11375, 10/19/67—Signed by President Johnson on October 19, 1967, this Order amended his EO 11246. Sex discrimination was officially prohibited in Federal employment. This Order holds the roots of the Federal Women's Program.

Executive Order 11478, 8/8/69—Signed by President Johnson, August 8, 1969, this Order deals exclusively with Federal employment and is one of the most specific and strongest Orders. EEO programs must be integrated in all aspects of personnel policies and practices. The concept of Upward Mobility programs is identified and the expansion of Federal recruitment activities is reinforced. (This is the beginning of the current FEORP program.) Affirmative action programs were spelled out with the CSC having monitoring power. The Federal Women's Program is specifically integrated into the overall EEO program. CSC was given the authority to guide and oversee EEO and AAP programs.

MISCELLANEOUS

Sixteen-Point Program, 1970—President Nixon outlined 16 action items to assure equal opportunity in Federal employment for Spanish-surnamed Americans. In February 1978, the official title was changed to the Hispanic Employment Program.

Federal Policy on Physical or Mental Handicap, April 10, 1978—Allowed filing of discrimination complaints based on physical/mental handicap by Federal employees or applicants. Prior to this it was against Federal policy to discriminate based on physical or mental handicap. However, Federal employees or applicants had no right to file a complaint on this basis.

29 CFR, Chapter XIV, Part 1606—Guidelines on Discrimination because of National Origin. EEOC adopted these guidelines on 9/19/80. They specifically deal with not denying a person employment opportunities based on his or her ancestor's place of origin; or because an individual has the physical, cultural or linguistic characteristics of a national origin group.





Summary

Now you have the tools at hand to understand and appreciate the benefits of Special Emphasis Programs.

When new employees or employees who have been around a while ask, "Why do we need all these special programs?"

You will be able to tell them.

Please complete the "Course Evaluation" form and the "Affirmation of Course Completion" form on the following pages and return to your agency coordinator as instructed by your agency.

Pre and Post-test Answers

- **1**. A
- **2.** A
- **3.** D
- **4**. D
- **5**. D
- **6**. A
- **7**. A
- **8.** A
- **9**. D
- **10**. A

Go to PAGE 28 and follow directions for completing the Evaluation





Course Evaluation

Directions: Please take a few minutes now to complete the guide Evaluation. Evaluations are extremely important to us because they help us to adjust the training and make improvements. We would appreciate your opinions and input. MARK YOUR RESPONSES ON THE SCANNABLE PARTICIPANTS RESPONSE FORM, PAGE 29 under the "evaluation" section.

Shade in **COMPONENT 1** for this "Special Emphasis" training.

1.	What is your ov	2	3	4		5		spons	se Form)
	Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Adequate	Effective	Very	Effectiv	е		
	ease rate the cou the learning obje			ch	No. I.	on the state of	V 100 V		S ME S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S
2.	Stated why we	have Special Er	mphasis Progra	ms	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Identified the S	pecial Emphasi	s Program area	s in USDA	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Described some Programs and t				1	2	3	4	5
5.	Listed the bene Special Emphas		ed outcomes of	the	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Stated the purp	ose of the Spe	cial Observance	es	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Did the course (1) Yes	provide you wi (2) No	th a basic unde	rstanding of S	pecial	Emph	asis F	Progra	ms?
8.	Was the method 1 Very Ineffective	d used to delive 2 Ineffective	er this training . 3 Adequate	? 4 Effective	Very E	5 ffective			

Please <u>mark all your answers</u> from this evaluation on the <u>scannable form</u> (PAGE 29).

11. Would you recommend this course to others?

9. Were the materials in the training well organized?

10. Did the course cover the kind of information you expected?

Turn to Page 31 and complete the Affirmation of Completion

(2) No

(2) No

(1) Yes

(2) No

(1) Yes

(1) Yes

28 April 1999

12. The Pre- and Post-tests were: (1) Usually too easy (2) Challenging but Fair (3) Usually too Difficult



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING PARTICIPANTS RESPONSE FORM

In	stı	ru	ct	io	n	S

Tear out at perforation

Fill in each oval completely, using #2 pencil or black pen. PLEASE use this original form and return it in good condition----do NOT copy, do NOT fold, staple, clip or rubber-band forms together. RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR AGENCY CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING COORDINATOR. It must be received for your agency to gain credit for your participation.

agency to gain credit for your participation.					
Component	$\bigcirc 1$ $\bigcirc 2$ \bigcirc	3	7 8		
Gender	\bigcirc M \bigcirc F	Employment	○F/T	○P/T	Student
Status	○Permanent	○Temporar	у	○Seasona	I
Pay Plan	○GS/GM (⊃WG/WL ○SES	○State	○County	Other
Grade	1-4	⊃5-8	<u> </u>		
Agency	○APHIS ○ARS ○ASA ○BCA ○RBS	CSREES FSIS ERS GIPSA FAS RHS FNS NAD FS NASS FSA NFC OALJ OAS	ONRCS OCE OBPA OC OCIO OCFO OHRM	OSEC ODES ODGC ODIG ODO ODPPM ODJO	ORACBA OSDBU OR (Civ Rts) RUS RMA WAOB OCR (Con Rel)
Use as ma		plicable. Where approp	riate answ	er A for Tru	ie and B for False
2 2 2 3.2 11.2.	Pre-test	Post-te			valuation
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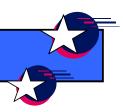




Backside of Participant Response Form - this is a tearout page



Tear out at perforation



Affirmation of Course Completion Special Emphasis Programs Self-Study Guide

I,	_ have completed the
Special Emphasis Programs course. I unde	rstand USDA's commitment
to Special Emphasis Programs. I also unde	rstand that I am personally
expected to follow the USDA policy concern	ning Special Emphasis
Programs while carrying out USDA activities	S.
Signature	_
Agency	_
Date	
	_
Supervisor's Signature	Date
- Caportion o digitatare	

- 1. Please complete this form.
- 2. Obtain your supervisor's signature confirming completion of this training.
- 3. Tear out this form and give it to your Training Officer.



Backside of "Affirmation of Course Completion" - this is a tearout page